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Top 14-16 recruitment tweets:

@micomm

A number of our students go to college already in Y10. It can be really engaging for them

@stevh2

Imagine getting 14yr olds and switching them on rather than getting switched off 16+

@SurrealAnarchy

I think I read that provision at an FE college for 14-16 has to be in a separate building. That dovetails with Baker's views

@miss\_mcinerney

Makes place planning a nightmare and I worry it will be come a managed move dumping ground.

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# Landmark decision on under-16s

Holly Welham

@HollyWelham

Colleges will be able to directly recruit full-time 14 to 16-year-olds for the first time from the start of the next academic year.

Earlier this month, FE Week exclusively revealed that the Skills Minister Matthew Hancock had written to two members of the 14 to 16 College Implementation Group, confirming that from September colleges could have a contract to recruit full-time 14 to 16-year-olds.

His landmark decision was in a letter dated December 6 to Mike Hopkins, principal of Middlesbrough College, and Tony Medhurst, principal of Harrow College.

Before Mr Hancock's announcement, the former Tory Education Secretary, and Lord Baker criticised the then unconfirmed plan.

In an article in The Times he drew attention to the recent "devastating" annual report from Sir Michael Wilshaw, the chief inspector. He concluded that FE colleges should only be allowed to recruit at 14 if they provided premises to set up an independent college as an educational charity, supported by local employers and a university, on the model of university technical colleges (UTCs).

Thirty-two UTCs have been approved in the five years since Lord Baker developed the idea with the late Sir Ron Dearing.

He added that the eight "inadequate" colleg-



FE Week broke the story online last week with several college principals commenting on the web

es highlighted in Sir Michael's report should immediately be told to provide premises to establish a UTC.

"The Baker Dearing Trust has already been working with Southwark College, which is in effect bankrupt," he said.

"Over the next two years, 300 UTCs should be provided in this way from FE colleges — roughly the number of technical schools we had in 1945. When up and running they will be training 200,000 students. This would have all-party support and be a real achievement for the country."

FE Week approached Lord Baker to expand

on his views, but he declined to be interviewed owing to work pressures.

Mike Hopkins said the move for colleges to enrol 14-year-olds was a "major and historic step forward for young people and FE. It extends choice for students and is a major vote of confidence in the sector."

Debbie Ribchester, the Association of Colleges' 14 to 19 curriculum policy manager, said: "Many colleges have a long and successful history of educating 14 and 15-year-olds on a full and part-time basis. This very welcome is a vote of confidence in college provision."

Mike Hopkins' expert view, page 9

# Job losses as LSIS faces closure

Eleanor Radford

@EleanorRadford

As many as 162 people face losing their jobs after the government's confirmation that the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS) will no longer receive funding.

LSIS announced it had "no alternative" but to begin a managed exit from its delivery of improvement services for FE and the skills sector.

Chief executive Rob Wye told FE Week the body would "support" its 125 permanent staff and 37 contracted workers.

"We shall be supporting them with what options they have, making sure they have every opportunity possible. We'll be talking to the emerging FE Guild to see if they can go there."

The reins of LSIS will most likely be taken up by the guild, which has begun plans to consult on the creation of a single body to set professional standards and codes of behaviour, as well as to develop qualifications.

Dame Ruth Silver, former principal of Lewisham College and chair of LSIS since it was formed through the transfer of assets from both the Centre for Excellence in Leadership (CEL) and the Quality Improvement Agency (QIA) in 2008, said it was "the potential waste of talent that was most distressing".

"I've been writing to all the chief executives of local authorities, universities, colleges and police saying we have a remarkable pool of talent. But we cannot create jobs if the jobs aren't there."

Mr Wye added: "I'd like to express my thanks to all the staff . . . it's been a sad day for LSIS."

LSIS will now cease delivering courses, training conferences and other support, including the provision of grants direct to providers.

Mr Wye told FE Week: "It is our aim to provide the planned high quality support and services we have already committed to at least until the end of this financial year, and in some cases through to the end of the academic year."

"We will also be exploring alternative destinations for our programmes and activities, so that the sector may continue to have expertly trained leaders and governors, continued support for teaching and learning, and assistance with its own improvement."

Dame Ruth said: "LSIS is an Aladdin's cave of riches. It will disappear as an organisation but its purpose will remain and the functions are on the shelf to be handed over. One thing that will preoccupy me over the next month will be a legacy strategy."

Both agreed that LSIS's greatest achievements were supporting colleges and providers



LSIS chair, Dame Ruth Silver

who consequently went on to improve by at least one grade in their Ofsted inspections.

A spokesperson for the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) said: "We are working closely with LSIS to analyse the key functions that need to be continued beyond August 2013 and to then decide on the best options for taking these forward."

"This will need to take account of the consultation to be held in January by the new FE guild partnership on its potential scope and activities."

Details of when services will end are being discussed with BIS and partners, and decisions on specific end dates will be released in the new year.

# Year-end ILR data deadline shifts

Eleanor Radford

@EleanorRadford

The deadline for Individual Learner Records (ILR) returns could be brought forward by three weeks in 2013 to the third week of October, the Information Authority (IA) has announced.

The authority board met after a consultation that considered the merits of bringing forward the final 2012/13 ILR deadline by seven weeks, to September 27. ILR data is used to make sure that public money is spent in line with government targets.

The board was presented with the results of an online survey it commissioned. Analysis of the responses found 28% of providers input 90% or more of their outcome data by the end of September but just 12 providers (as little as 2 per cent) supported the idea of bringing the deadline forward. This follows similar findings in a *FE Week* survey that found just 4 per cent supported the proposal.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) has called for “timely full-year data” to make its case for funding, the authority said.

The IA said the survey, with 612 responses, attracted the “most ever” for an ILR change.

Of these 106 providers added comments pointing out that bringing the date forward “clashed with the main enrolment period in colleges”.

The proposal paper submitted to the IA board also highlighted that 56 respondents, made up of colleges, local authority providers and independent providers, said a September deadline would “put extra pressure on staff”.

A further 49 respondents left a comment pointing out that the final return would be “less rigorous . . . leading to less robust data”.

The IA said that Geoff Hall, its chair, would now develop a proposal to bring the final return to the end of the third week of October, similar to the schools census deadline.

A spokesperson for the authority said: “It was recognised that there was a strong case from BIS that earlier data would help the FE and Skills sector in public spending negotiations, but an equally strong counter argument that an earlier return would result in less accurate data — particularly if the change is done hastily.

“An earlier close allows the Skills Funding Agency to redistribute funds earlier in the academic

year from under-performing providers to those providers demonstrating demand in line with published priorities.

It also allows the agency to produce reconciliation statements earlier to colleges to assist in them in submitting their accounts.”

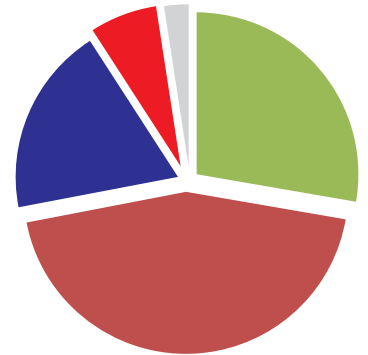
The date for ILR returns has been creeping forward for a number of years. Until 2006/07 providers were asked to send data by the last Monday in March in the following funding year. Even after this date a provider could send revised data if some was inaccurate or incomplete.

In years since the date has been in the third or fourth week of November — and no returns are accepted after this date.

The Association of Colleges’ assistant chief executive, Julian Gravatt, said: “While earlier return dates will help colleges collectively, such a change after the year has already begun may create undue pressures and incur extra costs. A phased introduction toward 2015 was the better option.”

Any proposals agreed with BIS will now go back out to the sector in the New Year for further consultation, the IA said. The final decision for will be made by the end of January.

The proportion of outcomes known by the respondents by the end of September for 2011/12



- 90%-100% of outcomes were known
- 70%-89% of outcomes were known
- 50%-69% of outcomes were known
- Less than 50% of outcomes were known
- Don't know / not applicable

Results from one of the IA survey questions

## LEPs get go-ahead to grant charter status

Holly Welham

@HollyWelham

The government has given Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) “sign-off” on granting colleges and training providers chartered status.

Skills Minister Matthew Hancock told *FE Week* that LEP approval was needed for providers to be given the stamp of quality. His decision has been criticised by the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP), which said it hoped the government would not make a “final” decision until the results of a consultation were published next month.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) has been consulting since late November on plans for chartered status.

In its consultation document, the government said status would help institutions to build their reputation, gain recognition for what they had achieved within their communities, raise the status of FE, and help the UK Border Agency to recognise legitimate providers.

BIS said it would expect the sector to have set up a body to award chartered status within two to three years and that the stamp of quality would last four or five years.

Mr Hancock, who described chartered status as a demonstration of quality, told *FE Week*: “The chartered status would require the sign-off of the LEP, so that the college or provider is working in a way which is consistent with the local skills strategy.”

He added: “LEPs are crucial to ensuring that the right skills are drawn-down in an area.”

AELP chief executive Graham Hoyle is concerned that LEPs have been given the power of approval. “While I can perfectly understand where the minister is coming from on this, I would hope that this wouldn’t be an immediate requirement,” he said.

“Some LEPs are very small in terms of resources, and while they might know about the colleges on their patch, it is extremely unlikely that they will know all about the many work-based learning providers spread across what can be a very wide geographical area.

“I hope that the government will hold back on making final decisions until it has seen the consultation’s findings.”

Joy Mercer, director of policy at the Association of Colleges (AoC), said it would respond to the consultation.

“It is imperative that chartered status does not replicate the mistakes of other initiatives such as the Training Quality Standard that promised a return for colleges on their investment in a quality approach to employers, but yielded little,” she said.

“LEPs are very different from area to area in their focus, representation, maturity and geographical coverage. If LEPs are to be involved in chartered status we would want to see a much more consistent approach that reflects the current best practice of college involvement in some areas. Colleges are very keen to work in partnership to design locally responsive programmes with LEPs as they are a crucial element.

“Any work with LEPs will, of course, be done on a collaborative basis.”

The consultation came after Lord Lingfield’s suggestion in October that a chartered body would raise professionalism in the sector.

## Success rate report errors continue

Eleanor Radford

@EleanorRadford

The government’s Data Service has published inaccurate Qualification Success Rate (QSR) reports for the second year running.

Providers use the reports to support the interpretation of their success rate results. Several colleges were quick to spot problems after the reports were made available for providers to download last Thursday morning, forcing the Data Service to issue an update on its website just hours later.

This follows similar problems last year when the QSR data had to be republished after qualification units were incorrectly included.

A member of a forum for college data staff emailed members: “Ours are way out - it’s showing over 10,000 more starts! Also comparing last year’s QSR the 10-11 numbers are different by similar amounts.”

About 4pm on Thursday the Data Service posted: “Following our earlier announcement we have identified a known issue with the sub-contractor reports in the 2011/12 Classroom Based Learning Qualification Success Rate reports published today. We are currently working on a revision to these reports and will shortly advise on arrangements for publication of this revision. We apologise for any inconvenience caused.”

The sub-contractor reports, which have already been identified as causing the problem, are new. The guidance notes for the QSR



report states: “New subcontractor reports have been added to the report set. These show the success rate of the non-subcontracted and subcontracted provision, and the success rate of the subcontractors used by the provider.”

Jerry White (above), director of planning and performance at City College Norwich, told *FE Week*: “It appears that the classroom QSR reports published today contain inaccuracies . . . If that is confirmed to be the case, then it is very disappointing that these important national data sets will need to be withdrawn and reissued for the second year in a row.”

More recently the National Success Rate Tables (NSRT), publicly available information about provider performance also produced by the Data Service, had to be temporarily withdrawn.

In June the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), on behalf of the Data Service, told *FE Week*: “The NSRTs had an unusually high number of unknown notional levels in the ‘other’ qualification type category.

“Our investigation into this issue has determined that there is an error and we have therefore removed the reports temporarily.”

As *FE Week* went to press, a spokesperson for the Association of Colleges said: “The AoC has not, as yet, had direct complaints or concerns raised with us from any of our members.”



Editor's comment

Sacré bleu!

Many readers will be aware that FE Week was the first to highlight the problem of short apprenticeships. In fact, we did so on the front page of our first edition in June 2011.

Then, in October 2011, our investigation found over 700 vacancies for 12 and 16 week apprenticeships on the Vacancy Matching website.

The government clamp-down came quickly, with a review of all apprenticeships planned in less than six months.

Next came new rules, with a one year minimum duration for new starts this year, announced first for 16-18 year-olds in December 2011, and then for adults in April.

Since then the agencies have acted upon the criticisms and challenges as well as implementing new rules.

But the nine month fixed term camping courier vacancies show that providers need to actually adhere to the rules.

Failure to do so damages FE for everyone involved.

So my message is: if you see plans or the actual delivery falling short of the rules and quality standard, report it.

Nick Linford, editor

Correction

Last week we admitted missing out the name of a Devon college that had opened a seafood academy in campus roundup. And eagle-eyed readers will have noticed the South of England was hit once again in our profile of Neil Bates.

FE Week has vowed to brush up on its geography knowledge after a reader pointed out Torpoint, where Bates grew up, is in South East Cornwall — not the South West.

There was also a mix-up of places on our event page, with the photo caption for the What Journalists Want conference saying it had taken place in committee room 17 of the House of Commons — when it was actually King's College London that had played host.

Have you spotted something wrong with this edition of FE Week?

If so, feel free to tell us about it, including the page number and story headline, and explain what the problem is. Email us at news@feweek.co.uk with Corrections in the subject line.



One in four adults ‘struggles’ with maths

Eleanor Radford

@EleanorRadford

One in four adults has the maths skills of a nine-year-old or worse and struggles with the most basic everyday sums, new research suggests.

The government last week released a 425-page report based on a Skills for Life survey that tested the maths and literacy abilities of 16 to 65-year-olds across England.

It shows that a quarter of the population — about a million more than a decade ago — can do maths to the same level as primary pupils aged between 7 and 9.

Between 2003 and 2011 there was a large improvement in adults at level 2 literacy and above, but 24 per cent (8.1 million people) lack basic numeracy, and 15 per cent (5.1 million people) lack basic literacy.

David Hughes, chief executive of the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), said he believed the government’s funding system could be

partly responsible.

“This is complex but put very simply I am sure that the funding system has pushed people towards supporting learners who can make the jump to level 1 and level 2 — and who they are confident will achieve the qualification — rather than focus on those with lower-level needs who are less likely to progress to a full qualification quickly.”

The government’s recent Skills Funding Statement said pilots on how FE providers could be funded on the basis of skills gained by learners are now in place. Evaluation will be published next June.

Carol Taylor, director for development and research at NIACE, said: “There has been a huge effort from teachers, managers, volunteers and learners over the past 10 years leading to a significant improvement in the literacy skills of the country, albeit for those at a higher level.

“NIACE’s inquiries, and the government’s review of Skills for Life, have shown that those with the poorest skills have been the least well served. One in six of the adult

population has some difficulty with aspects of reading and writing, and one in four struggles with maths. This means that they are seriously disadvantaged - in work, in health and in their role as parents.

“It’s vital that we ensure all adults are given the opportunity to learn the English and maths skills they need for everyday life.”

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills said this research supported the government’s drive to boost basic skills across the country, with Skills Minister Matthew Hancock last month announcing a doubling of funding for English and functional skills qualifications in English and maths.

Mr Hancock said: “Good English and maths are vital for getting a job and playing a full part in society.

“I would urge anyone who is struggling to take advantage of the provision that is on offer that now includes maths and English GCSEs for adults who missed out the first time round.”

Comments

Exclusive: Colleges given green light to recruit full-time 14 and 15-year-olds

Great news for young people. Let’s work hard now to ensure they get the independent advice and guidance that will allow them to see FE as a real, relevant, quality choice.

Mariane Cavalli, principal, Warwickshire College

FE colleges have so much to offer to 14 year olds, indeed many are already doing so, but with this new support from BIS we can do even more — high five.

Lynne Sedgmore, executive director, 157 Group

A historic day. We must all see this as a great opportunity to provide excellent,

high quality, employer engaged, vocational learning opportunities for young people. And in a Gazelle college they’ll get practice in entrepreneurship skills too.

Dick Palmer, chief executive, The Ten Group, Norfolk

This is of course a long awaited and welcomed outcome. Leadership of our communities is an important part of our role in colleges. Working collectively to offer young people the right choice for them will be critical in this process. If as a result of enrolling 14-year-olds in our colleges will reduce number of Not in Education or Training then that is the prize.

Asha Khemka OBE, principal of Vision West Nottinghamshire College

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FE Week profile

# Peter Davies ~ his story

Holly Welham

@hollywelham

## The project leader for the FE Guild consultation talks to FE Week

Peter Davies got his land legs back eight years ago after 35 years in the Royal Navy. He also learned sign language, moved into FE to steer adult education college City Lit to an outstanding Ofsted grade — and now is at the helm of the FE Guild consultation.

The 62-year-old was born in Eccles, Lancashire, but moved to Montreal, Canada, for five years when he was 7. The eldest of three, he crossed the Atlantic with his mother Winifred and engineer dad Roland. Family reasons brought them back to the UK.

“It was fantastic. When I think back to those five years I can only remember good bits,” Davies says.

His fascination with the sea began on those childhood trips back and forth to Canada. “It was so exciting being out on the open water — I became a sea cadet as soon as I could, at 16, when we were back in England,” says the father of two.

“That’s when I began to sail — on a reservoir in Lancashire — and learned about the Navy, from tying knots to traditions and flags. Every weekend that I didn’t have to study for school I would be out on the water.”

As a teenager he also loved tinkering with racing cars, which made engineering a clear choice for university. He went to King’s College London, with his final two years sponsored by the Navy.

Davies was the first in his family — he has a brother, Alan and sister, Deborah — to go to go on to higher education. “My parents were enormously proud; my mother’s still got pictures up of me becoming an officer at Dartmouth.

“They were ambitious for me to break out of their background. All the way through my life they were supportive. They encouraged me to broaden my horizons, without over pushing me. I wouldn’t have achieved what I have without their support.”

He went straight into the Navy when he graduated and had 13 different jobs in the service, from running research at the Ministry of Defence to looking after a group of submarines. It was when he came ashore with a promotion to Commodore on HMS Collingwood, the Navy’s land-based maritime warfare school, that he became interested in education and training.

“It was fantastic. My background in the Navy had been big project management and engineering, but I found I got more personal satisfaction helping people to progress.

“When students finished the course we’d make a fuss, inviting their parents down to an awards ceremony. Seeing the sense of pride and achievement on those youngsters’ faces, some of whom had been on the streets 14 weeks ago, talking to the parents and realising how

much they’d changed in that period, and we’d had an impact on that, it was really quite enlightening.”

After three years at Collingwood he became director general of training and education for the whole of the Royal Navy where part of his job was to set policy. During his leadership the Navy introduced foundation degrees.

“There was increasing recognition that we needed to give something that has value in outside world,” he says.

In November 2004 Davies, by now a Rear-Admiral, hit the headlines when he left the Navy to become principal of City Lit.

“There wasn’t an obvious next job for me in terms of what I wanted to do in the Navy. I’d had a brilliant career, I’d thoroughly enjoyed it, but it was time to move on to something different,” he says.

The move came at a time of challenging funding cuts. “There was danger of colleges like mine slowly withering,” he says. “I’m very proud that we bucked the trend. We expanded, we got in more fee income, but we also protected our work with the homeless, people with learning difficulties and deaf education. All those areas grew. When I left [in 2011] only half our income came from the Skills Funding Agency.”

He also went back into the classroom during his time at City Lit, taking courses ranging from sign language and sculpture to French and travel journalism.

“I was a really good way of seeing the college from the students’ point of view,” he says.

He also became a volunteer on skills for life courses. “One afternoon a week I would go into one of the maths classes and help the tutor. It was an eye-opener for me, I was in a level 1 group, and to see students who had really struggled, often coming from quite challenging backgrounds, move on and do GCSEs was great. It was very rewarding.”

“There was danger of colleges like mine slowly withering”

In his final week he was given the perfect send-off — an outstanding grade from Ofsted. “We were the first big adult community college to get a grade one. To achieve that really was a crowning moment.”

It wasn’t long before he was back on the open water. “Since I was a boy I’d wanted to go off sailing for months on end, so I said right, I’m going to take some time out and go away before my body stops me. My wife Diane and I went sailing for six months over the summer down to Southern Brittany. I thoroughly enjoyed it.”

In November he took a break from



retirement to lead the consultation for the Association of Colleges on the proposed FE Guild.

“We’re being very open, because the consultation is asking big questions. What’s the purpose of the guild? What does being sector owned-mean? It’s about hearing from as many people as possible,” he says.

After publishing his findings in January, and potentially an implementation plan in March, Davies, whose house overlooks Portsmouth Harbour, says that a summer sailing with Diane beckons.

“I want to sail all over the world, it’s such an adventure,” he says. “When I’m out at sea I’m just focused on the boat, it’s all-embracing. It’s probably the only place that I’m totally relaxed.

“You are completely away from everything. Sometimes you’re in the middle of the channel and you can’t see anything — it’s just you and the sea.”

### It’s a personal thing

#### What’s your favourite book?

Into the Blue by Tony Horwitz

#### What did you want to be when you were younger?

A doctor

#### What do you do to switch off from work?

Sailing my yacht — or tinkering with it in the winter

#### If you could invite anyone to a dinner party, living or dead, who would it be?

Eric Morecambe, one of the funniest comedians ever, and Ellen MacArthur, an incredible courageous sailor

#### What would your super power be?

Control wind speed and direction so I could always have a pleasant sail



## FE Week Experts



**The Autumn Statement proposals for skills policies and strategies may turn out to be less benign than they appear, says Steve Sawbridge**

Colleges must adapt to a new landscape following the Chancellor's implicit support for local employer partnerships (LEPs).

The Independent Commission on Colleges in their Communities noted with concern that the pace of development in LEPs was slow with remits unclear, a finding borne out by AoC's own survey published earlier this year. Their record on skills has been variable.

From 2015 LEPs will benefit from a single pot of growth-related funding to support the delivery of a strategic plan for local growth. And, yes, this includes funding for skills. But please note: not all funding.

**“There's clearly a danger of a return to external plan-led control”**

There's some encouragement for college representation on LEP boards. Provided, of course, that whoever sits on the board speaks for the whole local FE community and is mandated by it. But the Autumn Statement proposals for skills policies and strategies may turn out to be less benign.

The development of a strategic plan for skills makes good sense. If you don't have one, how do you know where you're going or who's behind the wheel? But for colleges, if this is the basis on which a devolved skills budget is allocated, there's clearly a danger of a return to external plan-led control; an anathema in the context of freedoms and flexibilities.

How to respond? Where skills plans are concerned it's best to be in the driving seat. And what's going to carry most weight is a coherent collective response from colleges within the LEP area.

The notion of self-organised groups of

# Local Enterprise Partnerships: the future or not?

colleges first emerged in the Foster report of 2005. Articulated more explicitly in Skills for Sustainable Growth (2010), self-organised networks are seen as the mechanism for engagement with LEPs and the means to ensure alignment between economic development priorities and the skills provision available locally. It clearly is an idea whose time has come.

But what will make these networks something more than a local provider “consultative forum”? And why should colleges put aside years of institutional self-interest and preservation for the benefit of the wider FE network?

Two reasons: a growing and genuine recognition that collaboration can achieve more for all; and a more immediate and practical response to increased competition from schools and the 57 other post-16 varieties of provider currently available.

There are already many good examples of self-organised networks working effectively with LEPs and other local partners – the network of colleges in Bristol, for example. But it's been interesting to see a collaborative grouping of colleges come together in Greater Birmingham and Solihull, something those who know FE in Birmingham might at one time have considered impossible.

It's symptomatic of a genuinely new way of working. A recognition that external partners will listen more attentively to a collective voice; that colleges can shape, influence and deliver skills provision, particularly where LEPs are struggling to articulate skills' needs.

The opportunities for gap filling in provision can be more easily achieved where colleges collaborate on the basis of their strengths. A strong unity will be a significant asset in attracting inward investment and can only enhance the strong individual brands of colleges.

There's still a lot to do – not least on the sharing and use of data and the development of a collective approach to quality across the network but a new collaborative culture is very definitely emerging.

Brenda Sheils, principal at Solihull College, put it succinctly recently when she said it's not just about being on-side with the LEP but inside, working equally with officers in the LEP secretariat as well as contributing at board level.

Ultimately this will be the real test of the maturity of the partnership; recognition that it is just that – one in which the collective strengths of all partners, including colleges, are utilised and mutually respected.

*Steve Sawbridge is the West Midlands regional director for AoC*

**Partnerships are the right groups to bind together local employers and FE, says David Frost**

The Chancellor's Autumn Statement makes it clear that local enterprise partnerships are being positioned as the body to drive forward local economic growth.

There is a growing understanding at the heart of government that while it has a responsibility to set a strategy for national economic growth, it should be left to local business and civic leaders to determine the obstacles that inhibit growth at a local level, and then work with local partners to remove those barriers.

LEPs understand the strengths and weaknesses of their economies and their local communities, which means that key policy decisions can be made locally.

The skills issue, particularly employability skills, is at the heart of their agenda and they will have a new and clear role in setting strategies for their area. Chartered status for FE colleges and providers will be dependent on having taken account of the skills priorities of LEPs.

In addition, the government will encourage LEPs to have a seat on colleges' governing bodies, with colleges represented on LEP boards.

LEPs will also be able to determine how the EU Common Strategic Framework funds, including the European Social Fund, are used locally and, where appropriate, they will be able to bring bidders together to access the expanded £340m Employer Ownership Pilot.

**“This country has had a dysfunctional skills system for too long”**

Many LEPs are already working closely with their FE sector and local employment and skills boards, and work closely with providers and colleges to form strategies. This will ensure that local people have the skills they need to access local jobs . . . and local business have the local labour force to meet their future needs.

Many boards are currently undertaking a skills audit as any decisions must be based on evidence. It will also be important for



them to be able to work in a way which has the most impact locally.

Again, I have been encouraged by innovation in FE. The new freedoms to recruit at 14 and to sponsor academies, studio schools and UTCs, have enabled the more forward thinking to position themselves at the heart of local education. The Gazelle group is driving forward the entrepreneurship agenda.

**“The current structures are not delivering the skills that employers need”**

In difficult economic times, we must ensure that we spend every pound wisely. That means that as much as possible hits the ground and is not soaked up in a bureaucracy that could all too easily swamp skills delivery.

This country has had a dysfunctional skills system for too long. Despite the billions that have been spent over the past decade, too many employers say that the current structures are not delivering the skills that they need.

And too many say that, even in a time of high unemployment, they have jobs that they cannot fill.

The recent announcements are a start in building a system that binds together local employers and wider FE for the benefit of local communities.

Importantly, there is a real urgency and desire to sort out the problem of skills, once and for all.

*David Frost CBE is chair of the LEP Network*



## FE Week Experts

# Collaboration is key in planning local skills

**Colleges and partnerships need each other to make sure that local accountability improves rather than undermines the emphasis on employment skills, says Lynne Sedgmore**

The Autumn Statement promises that the government will “seek to increase the proportion of spending that is awarded through the single funding pot for transport, housing, skills and getting people back to work...” The intention of this, of course, is a more localised planning agenda; the danger is that not everyone may prioritise skills.

Colleges are the natural place to start if you want a localised skills strategy. They have extensive experience of working with local employers, and the facilities and expertise to translate employer needs into a responsive curriculum. Employment outcomes for learners have long occupied the thinking and actions of good FE professionals, and an enhanced education and employment partnership to define and respond to such need has to be the most effective way forward.

So the recommendation that colleges be represented on LEP boards and LEPs on col-

lege boards is welcome. Our own research in 2011 suggests that this representation was at best patchy, and recent evidence suggests that things have not really improved. It is a missed opportunity, perhaps, that the recommendation was not stronger.

The real issue, though, is less about representation and more about the profile, influence and impact that the skills agenda has in LEP discussions and strategies. Key to that must be that the partnerships understand how effective colleges are and that colleges are seen as genuine strategic partners, not just delivery arms. Where colleges have a strong voice, some LEPs are already making an impact with an effective skills group communicating with and influencing the board. The government is right, though, to identify that LEPs themselves need development if they are to contribute effectively to the skills agenda.

Colleges have gone out of their way to establish and make these relationships work. New College Nottingham engaged its LEP as one of the first partners in its “big conversation” to tackle the city’s skills development needs; and it was the college’s model of strategic engagement that was followed when the city growth plan

was developed. Bristol and Leeds City Colleges chair their respective LEP skills boards and have a strong influence in skills policy. And Leeds City College, whose chair of governors chairs the Leeds LEP, recently won an “outstanding partner” award from the city council, partly in recognition of its engagement with the LEP and local employers.

As we are encouraged to have a greater involvement in the work of LEPs, it is worth remembering that not everyone sees them as the solution to the skills “problem”. Recent reports suggest that some business leaders are dissatisfied with the work of their LEP, and some SMEs, in particular, have reported that there is not enough focus on their needs. But the college sector can work with all stakeholders to form effective alliances, we are good at partnership.

Finally, LEPs need to develop their influencing skills so that they can help to shape the contributions of all the parties that contribute to the overall supply of skills, including higher education, schools and private employers. Talk of getting control of the adult skills budget misses the point, as funding from the SFA is dwarfed by both private funds and the rest of the education system. Actively involving



*Lynne Sedgmore is executive director of the 157 Group*

and drawing on the significant expertise and resource of colleges will help LEPs to prepare for the greater challenge of influencing schools, universities and employers to ensure truly effective skills in their localities.



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## FE Week Experts

# Ofsted's clear message for FE

**Strong leadership at every level is critical if England wants to have a world-class education and skills system, says Matthew Coffey**

There is a great deal of good and outstanding provision in the learning and skills sector, but much work and improvement are still needed, especially in FE colleges.

While the overall effectiveness of all learning and skills providers has improved slightly over the past three years, the proportion of colleges judged inadequate or satisfactory is the highest that it has been. In fact, 35 per cent of colleges are now less than good compared with 30 per cent at the end of 2010.

This means that 1.5 million learners are with providers judged to be less than good, compared with 1.3 million last year.

Last year, we judged four colleges to be inadequate; this year there were 13. And those 13 are serving more than 82,000 learners. This is not acceptable.

So why are so many learners in FE provision that is less than good?

Ofsted's annual report highlights the weak leadership and governance in those that have declined. Conversely, all the providers that improved to outstanding overall had particularly effective leadership that focused clearly on improving teaching and learning.

Chief inspector Sir Michael Wilshaw focused on leadership because, as he said, "leaders

change things. Leaders move things on. Leaders determine the culture and ethos of the institution."

Rising unemployment and slow economic growth present the learning and skills sector with enormous challenges, especially when supporting learners at what is, for many of them, a pivotal time in their life.

**"Just 7 per cent of young people aged 16 to 18 participated in apprenticeships in 2011"**

It is therefore critical that providers offer courses and qualifications that ensure their learners have a greater chance of progressing to further training or employment. Leaders need to focus on the usefulness and not the quantity of qualifications.

Current incentives largely ignore learners' progress and the value post-16 education adds. Funding clearly needs to change.

We have all heard a great deal about "the Ger-

man system" and particularly their approach to apprenticeships. Youth unemployment in Germany is one of the lowest in the EU and has been continually declining.

Apprenticeships have a high profile and are the main route to post-compulsory education and training for the 70 per cent of school-leavers who do not enter higher education.

In the UK, just 7 per cent of young people aged 16 to 18 participated in apprenticeships in 2011.

A recent Ofsted survey found careers' guidance on apprenticeships in England to be weak. We aren't Germany, and as Doug Richard commented recently, we can't simply adopt a system from one country to another.

But my lasting memory of a recent German visit is the simplicity of the post-16 education system. There are lessons for us to learn.

Improving young people's skills in English and maths is one of the many challenges we face, especially when nearly 80 per cent of those who leave school at 16 without achieving a grade C or above in these subjects at GCSE still have not achieved this standard by 19.

We have therefore highlighted the need for more teachers with the specialist expertise required to support these learners.

We know there are many good, outstanding and sometimes genuinely world-class providers in the sector. I attended a FE college. My youngest daughter attends one now and I have inspected many of them over the past 10 years.

We know that qualification success rates are



generally high. However, we do not know the extent to which these qualifications enhance their careers or support them in gaining employment or progressing to further education and training. We therefore need to broaden the systems we all use to measure the true outcomes for learners.

*Matthew Coffey is the national director, learning and skills, at Ofsted*

# Poor proxy for real skills

**The success of a college needs to be measured in broader terms than success rates alone, says Daniel Khan**

When I was a principal of a large college of FE and HE, my managers, governors and I looked at the chief inspector's annual report to give us a qualitative position of the sector and one more source of information that we could benchmark our own performance against.

This year's annual report indicates that nearly two thirds of colleges are good or outstanding.

This is a robust and sound result when the inspection framework is changing and more challenging, and colleges are needing to diversify and maximise their funding streams and re-examine, revisit and restate their missions.

The annual report no longer provides a view of the quality and health of provision in the sector since it is now driven by a risk-based approach; outcomes therefore are skewed towards the more challenged end of the spectrum, where work continues to be done.

The inspections also do not any longer reflect the whole of a college's provision, which means that much positive and vibrant work may be missed.

The new Common Inspection Framework places a high priority on the quality of teach-

ing and learning and the role that leadership and management has in raising standards.

No one can argue with this sentiment but there is little discussion and information on the methodology used to arrive at the inspectors' judgments - and we all recognise that teaching and learning is, in part, an art and not a science!

**"Colleges need the flexibility to respond to what learners both need and want"**

Therefore I support and endorse the view that the success of a college needs to be measured in broader terms than by success rates on qualifications alone.

The report highlights the variability in the schools sector and some examples of strong improvement are highlighted, but some areas are still struggling.

Many colleges are working with their school partners to share experiences and practices to ensure that students are ready

for the new and modern economy. We understand to move forward we have to be true to ourselves.

Education Secretary Michael Gove continues to ignore FE; Labour, at its annual conference, called for a gold standard qualification for young people to aim for, the Technical Baccalaureate.

That means every young person studying English and maths until 18 alongside more rigorous vocational courses, higher apprenticeships and a quality work experience placement.

What about the deal for adult learners? Are there enough adults getting the quality provision that they deserve?

Colleges need the flexibility to respond to what learners both need and want; and the government must ensure that the right incentives and funding systems are in place to support good and outstanding learning.

NIACE agrees that judging providers on their success rates alone is poor proxy for the attainment of real skills that are valued by employers.

There is also an agreement that sustained employment is a key outcome - hopefully, recent announcements on the links between the employment and skills systems will support this.

Adult learning is important for communities, it improves health and civic engagement and job opportunities.



A mature sector recognises that all is not perfect and seeks partnerships to drive up standards. But let us not forget that change continues at a staggering pace and we should not lose the significant gains made. The journey to excellence is endless...

*Professor Daniel Khan is chief executive of the Open College Network*



## FE Week Experts

# Mentoring is about more than staff development

**An award-winning programme to support race equality and career development should become part of the mainstream, not just an add-on, says Rajinder Mann**

Whether you are a high-achieving lecturer with your sights set on being a college principal or a young offender with a determination to quit crime, you share a number of basic needs - as inquiry after inquiry into the shape and future of FE keeps reminding us.

The 2005 Foster review of FE said it, as did this year's Lingfield review of professionalism in the sector. You need the self-esteem and self-confidence that raises aspiration and turns that desire into something concrete. Moreover, you need the support and mechanisms to sustain it - particularly if you are black, Asian or from a minority ethnic (BME) group.

This week, the Network for Black Professionals was thrilled to hear that our Black Leadership Initiative® (BLI) - our training and development arm - has won The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Volunteering Award 2012. We won it for our national mentoring programme to support race equality and career development which, in ten years, has trained 600 mentors and 500 mentees and contributed to increasing the number of black college principals from four to 16.

The programme emerged from the Commission for Black Staff in Further Education to address the under-representation of BME staff in senior positions within colleges. Building on the

success in FE, we developed the work shadowing programme in schools with Ofsted and the National College for School Leadership.

Forty participants became heads and deputies, an increase of 13 per cent in those promoted. The National College sees it as a flagship programme.

**“Our toolkit for mentoring gives pointers to understanding different groups and cultural values”**

We have extended our work in partnership with National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and raised awareness of the importance of mentoring to help young offenders turn their lives around and reduce recidivism. To spread the work wider we have produced a toolkit for mentoring, which gives pointers to understanding different groups and cultural values.

As our experience shows, such developments take time, whether for aspiring principals or young offenders. In his 2005 review, Sir Andrew Foster acknowledged this and said: “Workforce training, such as that developed through the Black Leadership Initiative needs to become more widespread.” Likewise, this year, Lord Lingfield stressed the importance of mentoring - which is at the heart of our operations - for newly qualified teachers and those coming in to teach from outside of FE.

We need more programmes for the future structured in this way and seen as a resource, not just as an add-on and not just for BME staff. It is about more than staff development, it is about engaging hearts and minds, with successful people willing to give something back - people such as the late Reg Chapman, former principal of Blackpool and The Fylde College.

Thanks to the efforts of the likes of Reg - who volunteered and trained as a mentor in 2004 - more than 100 principals in England have joined the leadership mentoring programme.

Reg said: “The mentoring training was among the best training I have ever encountered in my career. It was fun, professionally organised, challenging and insightful. It gave me a range of mentoring skills and insights I have used over the years in working with many BME mentees.”

Mark Flynn, former principal of South Derbyshire College, said: “I have been on other race



equality programmes and I have been made to feel part of the problem. On this programme, I feel empowered to be part of the solution.”

So join us in celebrating the Queen's Award. It is an honour to receive it. It is a tribute to the dedicated and committed mentors who give their time so generously, the staff team who work tirelessly to deliver the programmes and our very supportive board members. But the greatest honour would be if this programme became mainstream across sectors.

*Rajinder Kaur Mann, OBE is executive director of the Black Leadership Initiative*

# All we want for students is more choice

**The government go-ahead for FE colleges to recruit 14-year-olds from school is to be applauded, says Mike Hopkins**

The government's decision to let FE colleges recruit 14-year-olds from schools is great news for students and FE.

A good number of students will benefit from high-quality vocational learning while continuing a broad education within the national curriculum. They will be able to pursue vocational options in colleges that have capital expenditure available, equipment and staff with great industry skills. This decision has really opened up the system for those that realise that this is the best option for them.

I got involved with the proposal after reading Alison Wolf's review that recommended colleges recruit directly at 14 to improve the quality and status of vocational education in England.

The Department for Education asked the Association of Colleges to look at any barriers to such a change to see if they could be removed without primary legislation being altered - and I ended up as co-chair of its college implementation group.

I think Alison Wolf is courageous and I respect her work. In my experience she's prepared to say what she thinks, based on the evidence in front of her.

I feel really moved to have been involved with this and think it's the single most im-

portant announcement and structural change FE has experienced. I can't think of anything bigger.

After the Second World War the odd FE college started to recruit students for A levels. There were few youngsters coming through to take an academic route; now 43 per cent of full-time students aged 16 to 18 are college-based with just 26 per cent schools-based.

I suspect that over the next decade or two there'll be a similar shift, particularly if colleges deliver this change well, with quality and integrity.

**“This government sees competition as a driver for improvement”**

This is a courageous decision and a real game changer. I suspect ministerial frustration at how much money goes into the sector and the variability in performance that comes out helped it to be made. This government sees competition as a driver for improvement.

And while you can criticise competition, when FE was taken away from local authority control and pushed out into the big bad world to create partnerships and to compete where appropriate, the quality of services available to students and employers was driven up significantly.

Ministers have a right to put safeguards in place so I support the conditions imposed on colleges to be able to recruit. Only those rated by Ofsted as outstanding, good or satisfactory with improving results can do so. There also must be separate 14 to 16 leadership.

Ultimately it's good for the sector to have individuals from school backgrounds with the temperament and approach to meld and blend with the FE environment. These assets will add to the breadth of a college.

However, Shadow Education Minister Karen Buck's comments that colleges are adult environments and children might not get enough pastoral care were disappointing.

In the past you could probably accuse colleges of this, but that disappeared 20 years ago and we now have a massive experience of pastoral care.

I'll do everything I can to encourage the Labour party to come to this position. This is a great opportunity for students but it's absolutely vital the sector delivers it well.

*Mike Hopkins is principal of Middlesbrough College*





# FE Week campus round-up

sponsored by **empra**

## Jazz dance troupe move into Morley



Back row from left: dancers Aine Curran, Valentina Dolci, Dollie Henry (artistic director), Megan Preston, and Kimberlee Collicutt. Front row from left: Cherese Binedell and Charlotte Tooth

A troupe of jazz dancers has become a London college's first company-in-residence.

International theatre group Body of People (BOP) has set up at Morley College to help develop new courses.

BOP artistic director Dollie Henry said the group has always followed the spirit and inclusive expression of jazz "through collaboration and innovation".

"Sharing our professional work and educational philosophy with Morley presents us all with a unique opportunity."

The partnership is the first of its kind for jazz dance in the UK.

Morley's curriculum area manager for dance Julia Wood said the college has a strong tradition of performing arts education.

"It's our remit to provide educational support for the performing arts to ensure a continuing and contemporary contribution to our cultural capital.

"We very much look forward to working with BOP to develop an example of best practice that we hope will inspire other colleges and companies to work together."

## Canterbury panto 'really makes Christmas'



Pilgrims Way pupils with Canterbury College students

Hundreds of schoolchildren were transported to a land of ugly stepsisters, fairy godmothers and pirates as they watched a pantomime double-bill at a Kent college.

Dance and drama students at Canterbury College performed all-singing, all-dancing versions of classic children's tales to children at Pilgrims Way Primary School.

More than 50 students were involved in the production of Cinderella and Peter Pan.

"It was fantastic entertainment for the children," said Pilgrims Way assistant head

Adam Smith. "They've been here before and they love it every time, plus it really makes Christmas."

It's the third year the college has been putting on pantomimes for local school-children. Performing arts tutor Tony Greenlaw said: "Panto isn't panto without a receptive audience of children. Every year we look forward to producing small-scale pantomimes for local schools to come and enjoy. Our students benefit greatly from performing and this year has been our best offer yet."



Star Wars Stormtrooper visits Sunderland College for Equality and Diversity Week

## Sunderland feels the force

A robot and puppies recently helped students at Sunderland College to fight inequality.

They thronged around a life-size replica of a stormtrooper from Star Wars and learned how to handle guide dog puppies. Both were at the college to raise awareness of prejudice for Equality and Diversity Week.

"We've learned about different cultures and foods — and got henna tattoos. It's even made me understand the importance of buying Fairtrade food," said hairdressing student Charlotte Lauren, 17.

Charities, such as Young Asian Voices and Amnesty International, also gave talks to students on how to challenge stereotypes.

Joe Leggett, director of learning support at the college, said the week was a chance to celebrate the local region and to showcase the work being done by charities and the community.

"Our students really enjoy the week, making the most of the opportunity to get involved, learn about the important issues surrounding equality, have their say and make a difference."

## James makes plans for a City life



James Anderson with Tutor Melanie McHale at Priestley College

A Cheshire economics student has scored one of the highest marks in a finance exam.

James Anderson, 18, made it into the top 1 per cent of grades for his Level 3 School of Finance certificate. "I want to be an investment banker because I want to be living in the City and like the look of the lifestyle," said the Priestley College student.

James will be awarded a £750 scholarship

if he chooses to study one of the School of Finance's degree programmes. And he'll pocket another £750 if he achieves top marks in his Financial Studies Diploma.

James, who attended Bridgewater High School in Warrington, is now hoping to go to the London School of Economics.

On top of his diploma in financial studies he is taking A levels in economics, geography and business at Priestley.

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## Old Trafford dreams come true for team



Warrington College students at Manchester United's football ground

When Manchester United players left their Old Trafford pitch at half-time in a recent match, a group of Warrington College students ran on in front of the capacity crowd to show just what they could do.

"It was breathtaking playing in front of a 60,000-strong crowd," said Ben Graham, 16, one of the college's football excellence students.

He said Warrington's course had been "fast and demanding" since it started in September. He has gained the FA Level 1 Football Coaching Award, which he is using to coach Fife Rangers under 15s. "I already

feel I've got a great future ahead of me in coaching."

Mike Walsh, lecturer at the college and Manchester United Soccer School coach, said the skill displayed by the students was extremely high. "They will be the first to qualify on the new course and will have brilliant futures ahead of them, whether it is in coaching nationally or internationally or progressing on to university."

Jamie Livesey, 16, said: "It was a boyhood dream of mine to be on the pitch at Old Trafford during the game as I have been a fan all my life."



Weston College students with guests on their television show John Crockford-Hawley (front row, second from right) and Alex Lipinski (front row, far right)

## College launches its own TV channel

A Somerset college has become the first in the country to launch its own television channel.

CUTV is the brainchild of Weston College music curriculum manager Paul Raymond and his son Corry, 19, who is studying a Btec in media production.

An interview with Manic Street Preachers' record producer Greg Haver will be one of the first programmes, produced and directed by students, to be transmitted.

"This is a brilliant opportunity and resource for students to come up with

programme ideas and put them into action," Mr Raymond said.

"We've got four DCLR cameras that have revolutionised filming so the programmes will have a very professional feel.

"Each film will have a bank of information and pictures if people want to see how it's been put together, and will be shown on all campuses and available on the internet."

North Somerset Liberal Democrat councillor and keen historian John Crockford-Hawley will present a Your Weston show on local historical landmarks.



Students Jessica Lane and Oliver Lyon

## Students become Santa's little helpers

Barking and Dagenham College students have been working as Santa's little helpers.

More than 20 of the college's technical theatre students created a grotto at the Broadway Theatre in East London for more than 2,000 visitors expected to turn up to see the man in red.

They also spent four weeks creating a grotto in Redbridge.

One of the group, 18-year-old Oliver Lyon, said: "It was really challenging but loads of fun. My role was to manage resources and

time to ensure the project was completed by the deadline.

"We experimented with lots of different material and techniques to make sure the grotto looked as good as possible. Both the theatre and Redbridge Council are really pleased with the results."

Justin Farndale, programme leader for technical theatre, said: "Throughout this project the students got the chance to learn about different design and painting techniques that can be used in theatre. It was fun, worthwhile and great work experience."

## £10m training centre opens in Basildon



From left: director of Delta T Services Simon Wells, chairman of GTA England David Sherlock, chairman of Prospects Learning Foundation Chris Parker, chief executive of the National Apprenticeship Service David Way, architect Rob Westbrook, who designed the building, and chief executive of Prospects Neil Bates

Budding builders are learning new skills at a £10m training centre that's just opened for young apprentices in Basildon.

More than 300 employed apprentices and 200 FE students are now enjoying state-of-the-art facilities for their courses in building services from ventilation, plumbing and electrical installation to refrigeration and air conditioning.

The charity Prospects Learning Foundation, which set up the Group Training Association (GTA) centre, celebrated its launch with a spectacular opening

ceremony attended by leaders of the National Apprenticeship Service and the Education Funding Agency.

Neil Bates, the foundation's chief executive, said the new campus is attracting the interest of national employers who want to invest in the skills of young people.

"When apprentice numbers for 16 to 18-year-olds in construction and engineering have been falling nationally, the opening of a GTA in Basildon is a timely and positive reminder of the value that GTAs can bring to the skills agenda on a not-for-profit basis."



# FE Week campus round-up

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## Unpacking foodbank’s festive fare



City College Coventry students help staff at a food bank

When the Coventry Foodbank Warehouse was inundated with tins and jars of food after appearing on a BBC documentary, 12 students from the Peter Jones Enterprise Academy at City College Coventry stepped in to lend a hand.

“It made us realise how lucky we are to be looking forward to a Christmas with good food and presents,” said student Will Macarthur, 20.

The students have also set up a collection

point for the Foodbank at the college.

Angela Lamb, business enterprise manager at the academy and a lifelong resident of Coventry, said she is “always saddened” by the numbers of people in the city who are struggling.

“Volunteering at the Foodbank provides the perfect way for our students to make a real and valuable difference to the lives of many in our city, at the same time as fulfilling their charity challenge.”

## Top honours for sports students



Students Savvas Panayiotou, 17, and Lewis Hayden, 17, outside the Solihull College Sport Centre

West Midland sport students have been selected to compete at international level in football and ice hockey.

Savvas Panayiotou, 17, who plays for Solihull College’s football academy, has been chosen to play for Cyprus’s under-19 national team. Savvas, who has already represented his country in matches against Poland and Hungary, will start training with the team soon.

Marc Skinner, head of the football

academy at the college, said: “We are extremely fortunate and proud to have Savvas playing for Solihull. His ability to change direction at blistering speed is an asset that will frighten any defender and we fully expect him to progress to a high standard.”

Meanwhile, Saffron Allen, 16, competed in the world ice hockey champs in Shanghai, China, and now hopes to get a place in the Team GB Winter Olympics squad.

## Students’ work impresses veteran street artist

Greater Manchester students brushed up on their street art skills for a BBC television show.

The One Show enlisted the help of Hopwood Hall College art students for a programme on the street artist Walter Kershaw, famous for his murals of Trafford Park during the 1980s and 1990s.

The BBC filmed their progress over two days as the nine students re-created images on the outside of a house in Rochdale, including one of a Lancaster bomber.

“Although it was freezing, it was a great experience,” said fine art student Jeigar Stead, 17, from Littleborough. “It was really interesting to work on such a large painting — we have done big drawings before... but nothing quite this big.”

Mr Kershaw also visited during filming. Mike Simpson, the college’s programme manager for art and performing art, said the artist was very impressed with what the students produced. “He said the colours were fantastic. He gave them advice on shading — and a top tip of putting antifreeze in their paint.”



Hopwood Hall student Jeigar Stead, 17

## Winter wonderland at Moulton College



From left: students James Richardson, 18, Nathan Simpson, 18, Gregory Poulton, 20, and Mark Tompkins, 17

Santa is home for the holidays in a Northamptonshire college’s winter wonderland.

For the past six weeks construction, horticulture, floristry and animal welfare students at Moulton College’s commercial garden centre have been designing and building a thatched cottage and sleigh for Father Christmas, plus a stable for his reindeer.

“From the original idea of making this a special Christmas event for visitors to the garden centre, the students drew up the

plans for a winter wonderland and Victorian market,” said Simon Millar, the garden centre’s commercial manager.

“Commercial experience is a vital element of all courses at the college and this has brought together planning, team work, budgeting and resource management.”

Students also built a ski slope with a chairlift for the elves, a life-size Rudolph to keep an eye on the present-filled sleigh and giant snowmen. Hand-made wreaths, decorations and hampers will be on sale at the Victorian market.

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# Staff post is just the ticket for Villa fan

Lifelong Aston Villa fan Jamie Irvin is constantly dipping into his club's colours.

The 20-year-old has just finished a painting and decorating apprenticeship at the Premier League club's football ground and is now a permanent member of staff.

"It's a dream come true," he said. "At the beginning I was taking pictures all the time and sending them to my friends, saying 'guess where I work?'"

"Once I was painting the boot room and the players walked in and said hello. I was gobsmacked.

"It's nice to be proud of my job; it's one of the first things that I tell people. I feel privileged to be here."

But it hasn't all been fun and games. His first job as an apprentice was to paint a yellow strip on more than 4,700 of the stadium's steps.

He started his training a year ago. "After three years at college, I felt ready to start working but there was still so much that I needed to learn to improve my long-term career prospects, so an apprenticeship seemed like the ideal route," he said.

A friend persuaded him to join him at college to study decorating but pulled out at the last minute.

"The joke's on him, because he's a bigger Villa fan than me," Jamie said. "He couldn't believe it when I got the job."

Jamie, who can see Villa's stadium from



Aston Villa painter Jamie Irvin, 20

his home, said he didn't get on too well at school. "I got distracted too easily and got bored being stuck in a classroom. But the course at college was really good for me because it was 80 per cent practical and 20 per cent theory."

Tom Fantini, head of facilities at the football ground, said: "We took Jamie on at a

grass roots level and built on the skills that he'd developed at college. We were impressed with his work ethic and commitment to learn from his peers."

Jamie hopes to set up his own business at some time. "Doing an apprenticeship has helped me to get my dream job quicker than I thought was possible. I love coming to work

every day, and at Aston Villa I'll also have the chance to learn other trades and continue to develop my career."

He reckons that one of the best perks of his job — other than two free season tickets — is working on match days. "My dad and mum come to the games and they always take the mick — is that what you call work?"

FEATURED  
CAMPUS  
ROUNDUP

## FE Week jobs



Nescot is a forward-looking College of Further & Higher Education that serves a large area of South East England with a wide range of vocational and academic courses, both full and part time. The College is situated in Ewell, close to Epsom in Surrey, and is located in the green belt near Epsom Downs. The college was inspected in September 2010; all areas were graded 'good' or 'outstanding'.

At Nescot we want to help the learner succeed in their ambitions. Our students value our welcoming, friendly and caring atmosphere. Our lively learning community helps to make the most of their learning experience at the College.

### Head of Department - Mathematics/English (2 posts)

**£35-40k**

Dependent on experience, more for an outstanding candidate

Due to the continuing expansion of our Mathematics & English departments we are looking to appoint experienced people to lead our Mathematics & English teams.

These roles offers an exciting opportunity for an enthusiastic individual, committed to leading a dedicated teaching team who deliver a well established range of courses in Functional Skills and GCSE Maths & English.

The successful candidates will be qualified and outstanding teachers with proven recent experience in a first line management role in a post - 16 learning provider.

### Teachers in GCSE English and/or Mathematics and Functional Skills

**up to £31,628p.a.**

For the right candidates

We require outstanding classroom teachers to deliver GCSE English and/or Mathematics and Functional Skills to students working on vocational programmes from Entry 1 up to level 3.

The successful applicants will be qualified teachers with a degree in English or Maths, as well as possessing a proven track record in functional skills/GCSE delivery to a wide variety of students.

You will be a key member of staff within the Skills Team, delivering high quality maths and English teaching, assessment and support to learners across the college. Your job will be to inspire learners to meet their aspirations. As a teacher you will be sensitive to your learners needs whilst enabling them to express and reach their true potential. You will be experienced in recording and monitoring each step of progress however big or small.

Candidates should be innovative and pro-active in their approach to delivering high quality teaching to our learners.

**Applications must be made on line by 15 January 2013 (11 January for Teacher in Maths). Please visit [www.nescot.ac.uk](http://www.nescot.ac.uk) and follow the links to "Working at Nescot".**



## Executive Director of Resources

£84,000 per annum + attractive benefits package - Preston, Lancashire

Preston College is currently going through a period of transformation and has a vision to establish itself as a leader in enterprise. Do you wish to be part of the team that delivers that vision?

An opportunity has arisen for a high level appointment of Executive Director of Resources, which is a senior post holder reporting to the College Board and to the Principal and Chief Executive.

The post requires a person of exceptional ability to provide strong leadership in a multi-disciplined team having responsibility for large complex budgets, physical resources and development of people. It requires someone who can effectively manage a large team which supports delivery to 17,000 learners with an annual budget of c £32m. High performance skills in managing Finance, Facilities/ Estates, Capital developments, MIS and HR functions are important features of the post.

You will possess a proven track record of giving clear, sound professional advice to the College Board and to management and building success through inspiration and

effective working relationships throughout the organisation and with stakeholders, and to deliver on targets to strict deadlines.

Applicants must be qualified accountants who will have experienced broad commercial and business sector exposure along with that of a large education organisation/ group (preferably HE or FE sector.)

For further information and to apply email CV and covering letter to [richard.gould@capita.co.uk](mailto:richard.gould@capita.co.uk) or call Richard Gould at our recruitment partners, Capita Education Resourcing, on 0800 023 2801.

Closing date: Thursday 3rd January 2013

Selection process: 6th and 7th February 2013

**CAPITA**  
EDUCATION RESOURCING



**Don't forget to  
check out our  
jobs board  
online at:  
[www.feweek.co.uk](http://www.feweek.co.uk)**



**north lancs**  
training group  
*...a company you can trust*

## JOIN A TOP QUALITY TRAINING PROVIDER

Due to our continued quality of service in training tomorrow's workforce our growth continues

### Senior Data Analyst (Ref: DS)

A role has arisen for an experienced IT Systems Administrator or MIS Analyst with strong Crystal Reports and SQL skills to join a well established training provider in Accrington, Lancashire.

#### Essential Skills

Crystal Report/Business Object experience  
Basic SQL experience  
Good communication and organisational skills

#### Desirable Skills

Knowledge of Skills Funding Agency/Education Funding Agency systems and processes e.g. LIS/LARA/DSAT's  
Basic Technical knowledge

### Skills for life trainer (Ref: Sfl)

To teach maths and English within all programmes i.e. Foundation Learning, Apprenticeships and Job Centre.

#### The successful applicant will ideally have:

A passion to teach maths and English  
Some teaching experience  
A teaching qualification i.e. Certificate in Education/PGCE  
At least a L2 Maths and English qualification  
A full driving licence  
Excellent organisational skills  
Travel is required over the North West and Yorkshire areas

Please apply in writing stating position applied for enclosing a full CV and current salary details to:

#### PAM MALLABOURN

Operations Director  
North Lancs Training Group Ltd, Bradshawgate House,  
Oak Street, Accrington, Lancs, BB5 1EQ

**Closing date: 19th December 2012**

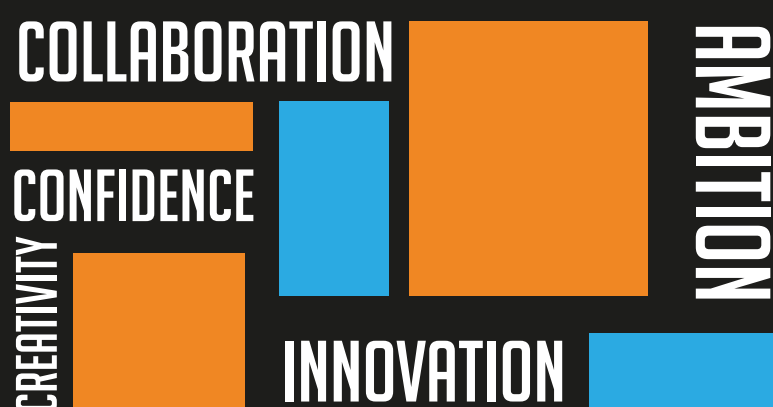
*North Lancs Training Group is an  
Equal Opportunities Employer*

**The next edition of FE Week will be  
out on the 7th January**

**To advertise with us contact  
Chardelle Mason on  
020 8123 4891**







North Hertfordshire College is at the forefront of a movement to create recognised Entrepreneurial Colleges over the next five years. This will only be achieved with the direct input from a dedicated staff team. We have recently recruited additional expertise and capacity to support the changing model of curriculum delivery that has been successful in changing the future of FE and we now have the following vacancy:

NHC are proud to be a member of the Gazelle Colleges Group



## Head of Curriculum Sports and Public Services

Up to £48,000 p.a. incl. PRP

Full-time 37 hours per week

As Head of Curriculum within an academy you will be an integral part of the academy leadership team. You will be responsible for the overall performance of the curriculum area in all of its aspects. In particular you must ensure that the curriculum area provides excellent teaching and learning which stretches challenges and enables students to achieve their personal, educational and employment goals.

Successful candidates will be inspirational leaders who are strongly focused on quality, and who can lead and develop a team within the academy. In addition, you will be expected to be proactive in promoting the College values with all stakeholders.

To apply for this position you will need to hold a degree and/or a professional qualification in sport and you will have a teaching qualification.

Please visit our website **[www.nhc.ac.uk](http://www.nhc.ac.uk)** to download the job description and to apply on-line.

Closing date for applications: **3rd January 2013**

Interview date: **16th January 2013**



**CREATE | BELIEVE | SUCCEED**



# Have a go at our Festive spot the difference!

Can you spot 10 differences between the two festive snow globes? Grab a mince pie and test yourself with our tasty teaser  
*Turn the paper upside down for the answers*



Answers: The snowman's hat has changed, the snowman is winking, Buttons missing from snowman's front, scarf has changed colour, no bow on purple present, present changed colour, bauble changed colour, star missing from tree, tree missing from background, bird has landed on snowman's arm

## FE Week Sudoku challenge

	1	3	6				2	
8		5			4	9		6
	4				3		5	1
	9	6		5				4
			2		7			9
7				9		3	8	
5	6		4				9	
1		2	5			6		8
	3				2	1	7	

Difficulty:  
**EASY**

How to play: Fill in all blank squares making sure that each row, column and 3 by 3 box contains the numbers 1 to 9

Solutions: Next week

Difficulty:  
**MEDIUM**

			3			4	1	
			2	8			7	
6								3
3	2						4	
		7	6		3	8		
	9						6	2
5								1
	1			7	9			
	3	4		2				

## Last Week's solutions

5	3	8	9	6	7	4	2	1
6	1	9	5	2	4	7	8	3
4	2	7	8	3	1	9	5	6
7	9	1	4	8	6	5	3	2
2	6	5	1	7	3	8	9	4
8	4	3	2	5	9	6	1	7
3	8	4	6	1	5	2	7	9
9	7	2	3	4	8	1	6	5
1	5	6	7	9	2	3	4	8

Difficulty:  
**EASY**

6	3	9	1	5	4	8	2	7
8	2	1	7	6	3	5	9	4
4	7	5	9	8	2	1	3	6
1	8	7	3	9	6	4	5	2
5	4	3	2	7	1	9	6	8
2	9	6	5	4	8	3	7	1
3	6	8	4	2	5	7	1	9
9	5	4	6	1	7	2	8	3
7	1	2	8	3	9	6	4	5

Difficulty:  
**MEDIUM**

## FE Week mini-mascot

Follow the adventures of *FE Week's* biggest and smallest fan!



*"Mostly this week I've been picking the perfect Christmas tree"*

You can also follow our *FE Week* mini-mascot on Twitter @daniellinford